

ONE SHILLING.

KITTY'S AFFAIR



Manx Comedy

by the

Rev. Canon Quine, M.A.



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:: KITTY'S AFFAIR ::



A COMEDY

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SCENE I.

Farm kitchen, Ballabeg. Window seaward; another window to fields, road, etc.

Enter "Herself" and "Kathrin." "Herself" at landward window; "Kathrin" at seaward window, sitting at wheel so as to look over her wheel through the window.

HERSELF :

I think, Kathrin, you'd better be getting tea ready!

(Kathrin, preoccupied with window, makes no response.)

HERSELF :

(Sharper, and turning) : Kathrin! You'd better be getting tea ready!

KATHRIN :

Isn't it early yet? Only four! (Glancing at clock, resuming wheel, humming air, and glancing out.)

HERSELF :

(In decided tone) : Well—it's going to be got ready, anyway. For we're to have a visitor (shifts kettle from hob to fire). Indeed they won't be long till they are in! (Begins to set round table.)

KATHRIN :

Who, mother? (without interest.)

HERSELF :

Who? Young Ballamore—and "Himself!" Young Ballamore—that's the Who! One would think it didn't matter, by the way you're shaping. But it's to you it does matter!

KATHRIN :

Matter! How, mother? (inscrutably.)

HERSELF :

Well, well! You'll see, maybe! (Enter unexpectedly, Kitty.) You, eh? (coldly, resenting the arrival.)

KITTY :

You're having tea early.

HERSELF :

Maybe so!

KITTY

(No way affronted) : Oh?! (in amusement at the mood.) Well, I'm not going to stay! (Coes to Kathrin; they whisper; and both looking out together.)

HERSELF

(Getting into line with the sea window, to discover what they are intent on) : And what's there so very wonderful about the sea to-day?

KITTY :

Only the Sapphire passing! Our George has got a flag out; signalling to us.

HERSELF :

Well (with indifference and contempt), you could see it from your own door its like—every bit as well as from here. And he's not signalling to us at all, Kitty!

KATHRIN

(Aside; feigning less than her real interest) : Going to where all, this voyage, Kitty?

KITTY :

Oh, the same as last voyage—Liverpool to Shetlands, with salt—the Baltic, with fish—back to the East Coast—then to Seville, for fruit, for London—then home. See, it's being lowered!

KATHRIN :

Yes, and being hoisted again.

HERSELF :

It's got nothing to do with us in this house whether it's down or up.

KITTY

(Ignoring Herself, and about to go): I wondered if you had seen the flag (to Kathrin).

HERSELF:

Well, there was no occasion for such trouble, and no need to be leaving your work and running into neighbours' houses—not with news like that, anyway, Kitty!

KITTY

(To irritate Herself, turns and looks at table): Visitor to tea—eh? And who is it?

HERSELF

(Amazed at effrontery): People's visitors are usually according to what they are themselves. But when you have got visitors, we're not poking our noses into your house, wanting to know—not at tea time, anyway. We're not the same Kellys; we're no relations!

KATHRIN:

Why, or course we're not!!

KITTY:

That's all the better friends we are, Kathrin. (Then to irritate Herself): I like our china quite as well. H'm—forget-me-nots. Ours has got rather a bigger flower!

HERSELF:

You're very smart, Kitty—very smart—for tenants (sarcastically). Are you waiting to see the visitor, Kitty? (Takes down silver tea-pot.)

KITTY

(Turning away, airily and inscrutably): Ch, I've seen him. One of the sort to be led by a string. It would suit me to marry a man like that; then I'd be mistress—mistress!—like you, you know. (Exit.)

HERSELF:

The impudence. The impudent minx—the face of her!

KATHRIN

(Serenely): Well, but, mother—isn't he rather a—

HERSELF :

No—no, he's not. You've been misinformed.

KATHRIN :

I mean——

HERSELF :

Allow me to know, Kathrin. Allow me to tell you——

(Enter Himself and young Ballamore, the latter shy, awkward, etc.)

HERSELF

(Suddenly changed to her softest and politest) : Oh, it's you, Dadaa (affects only then to discover that there are two). And who—not young Ballamore! Bless me. And how are you? Well, I'm sure it's a pleasure. Come in. Kathrin, aren't you coming forward to speak? Our Kathrin. It's young Ballamore, Kathrin!

BALLAMORE

(Confusedly and awkwardly) : Oh, I've seen her before!

KATHRIN

(No way impressed, rather disposed to add to his confusion) : Yes; but not to speak to.

HERSELF :

Oh—not to speak to before to-day?

BALLAMORE :

No—no—not to speak to—no!

HERSELF :

Well, now—see (to Ballamore), take this chair. We are just going to have tea; and you'll take a cup with us, I hope—just as we are—just as you find us! Dadaa, sit there.

BALLAMORE :

No—I must be going my ways.

HERSELF :

And, bless me, what hurry is there on you? You'll have a cup of tea, surely (seductively)?

BALLAMORE :

Well, I don't mind if I do. (Sits down awkwardly.)

HERSELF :

Kathrin, sit next to——. Sit here.

KATHRIN

(Turning and pushing wheel from before window, as pretext for another glance seawards) : Oh, I'll sit on that side, mother—opposite. He'll be more comfortable with more elbow room! (Goes round and sits with view to the sea window.)

HIMSELF :

We were just having a look round together at the crops and at the stock.

HERSELF :

Oh, yes. The Ballabeg is not a big place, of course (to Ballamore).

BALLAMORE :

The fences on the place are in good repair, though!

HERSELF

(At maximum of conversational complaisancy) : Yes, aren't they? The place is in good order, anyway, I'm often saying. And I am pleased to hear you think the same. And how did you think the crops are looking?

BALLAMORE :

The hay and oats, fair; but the turnips, only middling.

HERSELF :

Nothing like the turnips at Ballamore, I expect?

BALLAMORE :

Ballamore is uncommon good for turnips!

KATHRIN

(Aside) : Oh, I've no doubt whatever about that!

BALLAMORE :

This is uncommon good butter!

HERSELF :

Kathrin's own making up (evidently stopping at nothing).

KATHRIN :

Your own, mother! Don't you think it has a sharpish taste?

BALLAMORE :

Are these soda cakes her baking too?

HERSELF :

Every bit that's done in the house.
(Aside) : Kathrin, I'm surprised ! (Aloud) :
Even the preserves !

KATHRIN :

Are they very good, too? (to Ballamore).
Well, they're gooseberry. Did you notice,
mother—only gooseberry?—except the rhu-
barb for father.

HERSELF :

Bless me ! Have I only put one sort on
the table? Kathrin, get some strawberry.

KATHRIN

(Rising, whimsically) : Oh, strawberry—
strawberry ! Yes, I dare say he would like
strawberry. (Sets them on table.)

HERSELF :

And after tea, Kathrin, you might take
young Ballamore for a walk to show him
the shore brows. You weren't down as far
as the brows, Dadaa?

HIMSELF :

Only round the fields—only round the
place itself (obediently).

HERSELF :

Well, then, the two of you—two young
people—what harm?—take a walk as far as
the brows !

KATHRIN :

But he doesn't want to see the shore
brows. Do you?

HERSELF :

Well, now—may be you don't?!

BALLAMORE :

Me? No—no, there's nothing there but
grazing for a few sheep, is there?

HERSELF :

You see, Kathrin, what a sensible man—
for an acquaintance, you may say!

KATHRIN :

Because he doesn't want to go? Yes, I think that is sensible!

HERSELF :

You hear that, now? (to Ballamore).

BALLAMORE

(Better pleased with himself): Me? No, I don't want to go at all.

KATHRIN :

Quite right, too!

HERSELF :

Well, now—they're agreeing well, Dadaa!

HIMSELF :

Well, why not? Hasn't he seen her before?

KATHRIN :

But, father, he hasn't, even yet, spoken a single word to me!

HERSELF :

Oh, it's an engagement, sure enough, there'll be between you one of these days. The young Ballamore wants a partner. Isn't that so? (to Ballamore).

BALLAMORE :

I suppose it is (sheepishly).

KATHRIN

(Aside): In the turnip—and gooseberry—and strawberry line! H'm (laughs a little, but suppresses it).

BALLAMORE

(Gulps cup of tea, suddenly rises): Well, I must be going my ways.

HIMSELF

(Obedient to hint from Herself): You've time enough, man!

HERSELF :

And, bless me, what hurry? Aren't you going to have a smoke with Himself?

HIMSELF

(Vaguely, aside to Kathrin): Is there any tobacco in the house, Kathrin veen?

KATHRIN :

But (affecting surprise) he doesn't smoke, mother?! I hope not!! (Aside): Could he, I wonder?

HERSELF :

Well, too much of it I don't approve myself. It's like you smoke, though, sometimes?

BALLAMORE :

Me? No, I'm not smoking—no. Never learnt! (endeavouring to get away).

KATHRIN :

Quite right, too!

HERSELF :

Well, you'll be putting a sight on us again, may be—even middling soon, it's like. Kathrin's seldom from home. As a rule she's at home—where she ought to be—I'm saying!

BALLAMORE :

Well, may be I'll come; I don't know (awkwardly secures hat, stick, and gets to the door). Well, it's a fine evening, though. (Exit.)

HERSELF

(About to follow Ballamore out of doors): What do you think of him, Kathrin? Very respectable, and well off—yes, very well off, Kathrin (with emphasis).

KATHRIN

(With emphasis, too): He's a toot—a boy-bough—a—

HERSELF

(Determinedly): Well, you'll marry him, anyway! Toot, as he is—boy-bough, as he is—you'll marry him. That's all! Come Dadaa, we'll go with him as far as the gate. (Exit.)

HIMSELF

(Lingering): It's best to agree with her, Kathrin.

KATHRIN :

No, father. No, I won't.

HIMSELF :

She has made up her mind, Kathrin.

KATHRIN :

Well—but you're the master.

HIMSELF :

Yes, yes; the master, of course. But she's the mistress. I've got to do things—got to do them! I'm practising patience, Kathrin—practising patience!

KATHRIN :

The continual dropping won't wear me, anyway!

HIMSELF :

It has worn me quite smooth, Kathrin—smooth as glass. That's me, by this time, Kathrin. (Exit.)

KATHRIN

(Violently): Toot! Boy-bough! Never! No—not even if there wasn't you, George! (more serene, and goes to the window and gazes to sea).

[CURTAIN.]


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SCENE II.

(Country road, or lane—by a stile, or gate.)

KITTY

(Within gate, or stile, purposing to intercept young Ballamore, sees him approaching): Poor young Ballamore—not so bad a sort, after all! I believe he could be shaped into something yet. For in that way, he's not so hopeless as the rest—the smart fellows that end in louts when they get settled down in life. He only needs somebody—like myself, say—to be his better half! (Looks again to observe his nearer approach.) Ever since the day George sailed, he has been coming to see Kathrin (laughing at the thought). But, as for “court-
ing,” there hasn't been any on his part; and, I am sure, less than none on her's (looking along the road again). But “Herself”—well she has worked like a good one. I think it's about time for me to try my hand. (Enter young Ballamore): Good morning!

BALLAMORE

(Starts): Oh, you, Kitty!—I mean—at least, Miss Kelly, I ought to say!

KITTY:

I hear you're going to be married! (gaily).

BALLAMORE:

Well, I don't know. I suppose so.

KITTY:

You suppose so! Aren't you engaged?

BALLAMORE:

Well, she's saying it's an engagement.

KITTY:

Who? Do you mean Kathrin?

BALLAMORE:

Her? No!—but “Herself,” you see, doesn't give a body chance or choice. She says it's settled; and before you know where you are, it's got to be!

KITTY :

Oh, that's the sort of engagement!

BALLAMORE :

Well—but there's no way out of it.

KITTY :

Do you want a way out of it?

BALLAMORE :

Well, there's Kathrin, you see. I don't believe in my heart that it's her doing—no, not any more than my own. You see, she's rather distant, laughing in her sleeve at "Herself"—and may be at me, too—not wicked, you know!

KITTY :

Oh, no, she's not wicked. But—now that there's all this confidence—what about "Himself?"

BALLAMORE :

"Himself?" Oh, don't ask me. That's easy seen. It's very little that he's got to say, is my belief.

KITTY :

But aren't you in love with Kathrin?

BALLAMORE :

(Hesitating): I daresay you're as nice nearly as she is! In my opinion, you are. Only, you see, it's an "engagement."

KITTY :

Well, but may be, though, I don't quite know what an engagement is!

BALLAMORE :

You don't make it, and you can't break it—that's one thing it is. I've been reading about these breach-of-promises—five hundred pounds down, or get married, one or the other. It's awkward. It places a man in an awkward position. It makes a man uncommon awkward, mind!

KITTY :

But what promises are you breaking, if you haven't made one?

BALLAMORE :

Oh, no matter. I'm nearly afraid of being

seen talking to you—though, I daresay, you wouldn't tell a falsehood, exactly. Anyway, you're one that wouldn't tell a lie, at least.

KITTY :

Still, it's well to be on the safe side, even with me (smiling).

BALLAMORE :

Oh, I could trust you!

KITTY :

Still, it's well to be cautious (whimsically).

BALLAMORE :

But I could trust you, couldn't I?

KITTY :

Five hundred pounds might be a strong temptation, don't you think?

BALLAMORE :

No—no. No, not to you.

KITTY :

H'st! Somebody's coming. (Exit Ballamore.) (Laughing): No, not so bad after all! H'm—if he can trust me—I begin to think I can trust myself! (Exit.)

[CURTAIN.]

7 minutes

SCENE III.

Cabin of "The Sapphire," in Port of Seville.

Enter—seated, George "The Skipper."

Almanac, map, sextant, etc., boxes, parcels, etc.

SKIPPER :

(Starts, suddenly, cheerfully—feeling vessel lift with the rising tide, and getting afloat) : That's right, old "Sapphire." Restless, eh? Well, we'll be away this tide. You don't mind a sou'-wester crossing the bay this time, eh? (Enter Bill Quilliam, mate, and old salt.) Well, Quilliam—everything stowed?

QUILLIAM :

Aye!—well—excepting these boxes, of course, unless it's contraband that's in them!

SKIPPER :

(Preoccupied) : What's the weather shaping like, Quilliam?

QUILLIAM :

We'll want oilskins to-morrow—sou'-west, I expect. Anyway, we're extra battenning the hatches. Is them things to go into the hold, or not?

SKIPPER :

Only some odds. Let them stay where they are. I'll stow them (getting up, and setting grog on the table). She's afloat, isn't she?

QUILLIAM :

She's easier, anyway—more natural to the foot. I daresay she's lifting a bit. (Aside) : Handier to get them ashore, unknownst to the tide waiters (looking at parcels).

SKIPPER :

You'd best get the crew down (setting several glasses). Let them batten down the hatches first, and then come and have a glass of grog.

QUILLIAM :

Well, as it's for home we're steering—aye there's no harm in that! (Exit.)

SKIPPER :

(Stowing parcels in locker, etc.): Some bits of Spanish lace that you, Kathrin, will set off—aye—as well as any of them seniori-tas in the Alcazar Gardens. (Taking another parcel): A few trifles—h'm—that, I daresay, you'll know what use to put to, Kathrin! (Sings.)

Air, "Manx Exile."

I'll tell you the Island and port of the main
That I long in my heart to go back to again;
My boyhood to recall, and my years to for-
get—

The haven of my heart that I mean to sail
to yet!

Sail to yet! Sail to yet!

Oh name but that Island, oh speak of that
glen,

The throb of my heart is as passionate as
then;

The vision will arise of her laughing hazel
eyes,

And the rolling of the raven hair that on
her shoulder lies.

Raven hair! Hazel eyes!

The hills all in purple, the fields all in
green,

And the gorse in golden glory on the hedges
all between;

The roses all in bud, and the thorns all in
flower,

I should like to be again on the Island for
an hour.

For an hour! For an hour!

(Enter Quilliam and Crew.)

SKIPPER :

Well, men, as she's afloat (takes a seat, and sets the example of helping himself to grog)—all hands, help yourselves! (The men crowd forward, fill their glasses, clink them, and drink—in picturesque arrangement of scene—Skipper seated in centre.)

QUILLIAM

(Helping himself again, others following): Well, Skipper, here's to her that's to be your missus!

OMNES :

Good health to her, Skipper!

SKIPPER :

Thank you, men—thank you! Now, fill up! I've got a word to say to you! (They form scene; Skipper centre—men right and left.) There's a bet—a wager—on the sloop.

OMNES :

(Attitude of interest.)

SKIPPER :

That American fruit schooner—three-master—is for London, and sails this tide. Well and good! The Yankee has been boasting about her, of course!

OMNES :

Aye—well, of course!

SKIPPER :

Well and good. These fruit shippers know the runs the sloop has made; and they're always gambling—ready for a bet—having a wager, you see—being full of money.

OMNES :

Of course!

SKIPPER :

Says one of this firm to me, "What time allowance should the Yankee schooner give the sloop between here and London," says he, "for a bet of £100?" says he. "No time allowance," says I.

OMNES :

Certainly!

SKIPPER :

"Good," says he. "I'm backing the sloop," says he. "What's more," says he, "£50 to your share, half the wager—paid by my agent in London," says he, "if you win," says he. "No love lost if you lose," says he.

OMNES :

Certainly!

SKIPPER :

Now, men, it's prize money this voyage. Myself half!

OMNES :

Certainly!

SKIPPER :

The Mate—that's Quilliam—a ten pound note.

OMNES :

Certainly!

SKIPPER :

The rest equal shares.

OMNES :

Of course! Certainly!

SKIPPER :

Well, "The Sloop!"

OMNES

(Clinking glasses): "The Sloop!" The Mate will oblige!

QUILLIAM :

Well, as she's afloat—as it's for home we're steering—and prize money—then

Air—"Heroes All."

While we lie in foreign harbours.

Heart abroad we never roam!

Senoritas, in your harbours,

We are staunch to the girls at home!

But you girls—for all our yearnings,

Homewards, youwards, all the time,

Sailors, we that sail for earnings,

Love a love in every clime!

She's the "girl" that in our toasting

Is alone "the paragon!"

She's the "beauty" of our boasting,

She's "the darling," she's the one!

She's "the ship" that on the billow—

Is our fortune, is our life!

She's the home and she's the pillow,

She's the sailor's other wife!

Drink again, clink again—"The Sloop."

[CURTAIN.]

15 min
with songs (2)

SCENE IV.

Farm-house kitchen, as before—Enter Kathrin. (The clock indicates late evening—table laid—Kathrin, with preoccupied air, preparing meal against return of Himself and Herself, who are from home.)

Enter Kitty—sprightly, as usual, with suppressed excitement, and an undercurrent of serious purpose.

KITTY :

Well, all alone by yourself, to-day?

KATHRIN :

Yes. Both of them gone to Ballamore.

KITTY :

O-o-o-h!

KATHRIN :

Yes, to go—Herself, at any rate—to go with young Ballamore for the marriage licence!

KITTY :

The licence? O-o-o-h! Has it got that far? But, Kathrin, does Herself know that you WON'T—that you absolutely WILL NOT?

KATHRIN :

That depends on what “know” means. Evidently she thinks, at least, that I WILL. I've told her my mind; and she has told me her's. Result, Kitty, they're gone to-day; and that's the business they're on. Wednesday next she has settled to be the “Happy Day,” as she calls it.

KITTY :

But, young Ballamore? I can't quite see—

KATHRIN :

Oh, bother him! I've no patience with a fellow that IMAGINES he's in this or that position, when he isn't—when it's a thing of other people's making, not really his own! Yes, and couldn't be persuaded out

of it, just because Herself says it is so! As to his taking a hint—(shrugs to indicate something out of the question).

KITTY:

(Whimsically, and impatient of him, too): Then he ought to be—oh, I don't know what—SHAKEN—SHAKEN out of it (with a gesture as of shaking somebody).

KATHRIN:

There isn't anybody in the whole world for me but George! No, and there never will be!

KITTY:

Well, then—

KATHRIN:

(Firmly): Well, Himself practises patience; and so can I, up to a certain point.

KITTY:

But for a man—a father—he ought, of course.

KATHRIN:

Anyway, Kitty—beyond that point; not one step further!

KITTY:

So—

KATHRIN:

So to church I WON'T GO. Fix it as they please, I WON'T! That morning I'll get up early, and go off to the shore, and stay there all day. And, just for sheer obstinacy—just to show that I can be quite as stubborn as Herself—they can go on now—they can go on for the present; for I mean to keep that intention to myself.

KITTY:

But, Kathrin, why not go to church and—to give them something for their trouble—have the battle out there?

KATHRIN:

There? In the church? Good gracious! But I'm not going to be married to him; and, Kitty (deprecatingly), even if young Ballamore is a goose, you yourself wouldn't treat him as badly as that!

KITTY :

Oh, bother him! (Stamps her foot.)
(Considers): Listen! I was to be brides-
maid, Kathrin, was I not—whoever you got
married to?

KATHRIN :

Yes; but to be bridesmaid at a wedding
that's going to end that way!

KITTY :

Oh, it won't end quite that way.

KATHRIN :

(Not comprehending): Won't? But it
would if I went.

KITTY :

(Going to the seaward window): Come
and see what will convince you, then (peer-
ing out)—“The Sapphire.” Don't you see
a light being hauled up?

KATHRIN :

(Who has also rushed to the window):
And lowered again! Yes—yes—yes! It's
George! It is George! (Rushes from the
window, takes down a lantern, lights it):
I'm going out to signal to him! Come
along, Kitty.

KITTY :

Well—now you'll go to church just as
Herself would like you to?

KATHRIN :

Go to church? Yes—yes—that I promise
you! And, Kitty—Kitty—Kitty, not a word
to any living soul but George.

KITTY :

Not a breath! (Exit Kathrin.) Not a
breath—no, I should say not!

(Enter Herself and Himself, as from a
journey—encounter Kitty on point of
going out.)

HERSELF

(Condescendingly): Good evening—ah'm!
—Kitty.

KITTY :

Ah'm!—good evening (with little flouting
turn, exit).

HERSELF :

The impudent—! However, Dadaa—one
of these days I'll—

HIMSELF :

(Sitting down in a chair): Smooth—
polished like glass (sighs).

HERSELF :

Yes; I'll be even with her, the impu-
dent—

[CURTAIN.]

8 min

SCENE V.

Cabin of "The Sapphire," in the home port.
—just arrived. (Enter Skipper.)

SKIPPER

(Soliloquy): To get your things ashore before the tide waiters come smelling round—that's the point, Kathrin. (Considers.) (Enter by the companion ladder, Kitty): Hello, Kitty! You?

KITTY

(Breathless): We weren't expecting you for a week yet.

SKIPPER:

I wasn't expecting myself, either, I can tell you.

KITTY:

Saw you off the coast just at sunset. I've lost no time, have I?

SKIPPER:

We sailed "The Sapphire" rather hard on the v'y'ge home. There was prize money in it—prize money and bonus! And the sloop is nearly a week before she was due. (Stares at her): What's up? Is our ones at home all right?

KITTY:

At home, yes; but—

SKIPPER:

What's wrong?

KITTY:

Kathrin—

SKIPPER:

What is it? Out with it! (impatiently).

KITTY:

She's going to be married—

SKIPPER:

Married! Yes, I expect she is; but—

KITTY:

The licence got already! To be married on Wednesday!

SKIPPER :

Wednesday? That's sudden! Is it to another man, you mean?

KITTY :

To young Ballamore!

SKIPPER :

And who's done that? Not Kathrin—?!

KITTY :

Herself—the Mistress; and Kathrin forced into it—kept under lock and key.

SKIPPER :

(Savagely): Is she? Not if I knows it! But how? Kathrin?! Why, bless my soul—

KITTY :

The very day you sailed he was brought over to the Ballabeg; and has been coming over ever since—brought—forced—to come, Herself doing the courting, till she has it all cut and dried, and the marriage licence got.

SKIPPER

Pacing up and down savagely): Well, she's mine; and mine she's going to be unless—(stops savagely and confronts Kitty)—unless—. Now, Kitty, God's truth, is Kathrin agreeing to it?

KITTY :

No, George. That's all right. Don't you doubt her. Listen! Go you and get a licence. Kathrin is all right! Go this very day.

SKIPPER :

And sail to windward? Well, if that's it, certainly—to windward of the Devil himself! It it's the coach I'll hire, I'll have the licence—a special licence—from the Pishop himself.

KITTY :

Wednesday, at nine in the morning.

SKIPPER :

Aye!—or eight, or seven, or six! And I'll break every bone in the body of that lubber.

That's going to be my wedding breakfast. Founded steak is what there'll be—chops, cutlets, hash! Him!

KITTY:

(Inscrutably): I'm going to be at the wedding, of course. I'm to be bridesmaid.

SKIPPER:

All the better. You'll see what pieces I'll cut that "cake" into. Kitty, as sure as you stand in your shoes this minute, I'll give that fellow the best welting—

KITTY:

After you're married, though, George!

SKIPPER:

Anyway, you've warned me. No time to lose; and look here, Kitty—

KITTY:

You'll be in a different humour after you're married, George.

SKIPPER:

We'll see about that. Look here, you're going ashore. Well, d'you see these parcels—d'you know how to carry Spanish lace ashore? Women can manage it! There's some for yourself, you know!

KITTY:

H'm!—I daresay I do, George. If you'll go on deck for ten minutes or so—(Skipper bawls up the companion way): Quilliam! (Enter Quilliam, coming down): Quilliam, you go ashore—see? And when she comes ashore, if there's a hand laid on her—see?—or an eye turned towards her—see?—by, you know who—see?

QUILLIAM:

Them tide waiters, of course! Certainly!

SKIPPER:

Well, you'll know where to be, see? Cut up rough, and into the harbour with them! There's no contraband on board this vessel.

QUILLIAM :

Certainly not! There never was! Not on any vessel I ever sailed on!

SKIPPER :

Till she gets clear—see? (Pre-occupied with his own main affair, emphatic in this detail.) (Exeunt Skipper and Quilliam up companion way.)

[Curtain—Slow music.]

Curtain rises, with Kitty very much padded out.

KITTY :

How I look don't matter. That's the way with rich people. Everything becomes them. But, really, with so much fine lace about me—. (Exit awkwardly by companion-way, laughingly.)

[CURTAIN.]

11 minutes

SCENE VI.

Entrance to Churchyard (gate—path—church window in gable, round which path disappears as to church door). Enter (outside the gate) Skipper and Quilliam (other salts at sides).

SKIPPER :

(Pacing restlessly, holiday suit, nautical style, red Spanish scarf round waist; large document—special marriage licence—in breast pocket) : They're late, Quilliam !

QUILLIAM :

The Parson hasn't come yet !

OMNES :

Here he is, though ! (Step aside.)

PARSON

(Arriving) : Good morning, Skipper. I thought you were away at sea !

SKIPPER :

No ; I'm home. Here's the papers. I believe that's the Charter Party. Is it all right, sir ?

PARSON :

But time enough when you come into church (as though not necessary to look at licence).

SKIPPER :

Still, I want to know (doggedly) if they're all right (thrusting the licence into his hand).

PARSON :

(Opens, unfolds, reads) : Well beloved George Kelly—h'm !—Kathrine Kelly—h'm ! --etc., etc. Given under my hand this—I'm !—day of—h'm ! Oh, yes (refolding and handing back) ; that's all right—perfectly right. You're waiting for the bride, I suppose ? (About to enter gate ; pauses.) (Enter Ballamore and country groomsmen.)

BALLAMORE

Also with document in pocket; takes it out): Here, sir. It's the licence (awkwardly).

PARSON

(Smiling, complaisant, opens, and reads): H'm! Well beloved Thomas Creer—h'm!—Katharine Kelly—h'm!—etc., etc. Given under my hand this—h'm—day of—h'm! Oh, yes (refolds and hands back licence). (Aside): Two Katharine Kellys. Odd coincidence. (Aloud): You'll wait here for the ladies, I suppose?

SKIPPER:

Aye, sir! You get your togs on (civilly). (Exit parson through gate, up path, and exit.) (To Ballamore): Look here, sirree! There's a surprise in store for you, my man!

BALLAMORE:

And how? Isn't she coming, or what?

SKIPPER:

That she is, I expect. But, do you see? My papers is passed as correct; and I'm cleared—before you! So your's is no good! Do you hear? (savagely).

BALLAMORE:

Is it the licence you mean, or what?

SKIPPER:

See here! Do you see that? (Holds out his own licence.) Well, I'm to be spliced to her (taps licence); and your papers ain't no use! You've missed the tide, my man!

QUILLIAM:

My advice to you (to Ballamore) is, sheer off, out of the town. He'll welt you, you know!

BALLAMORE:

(Scared, shifts off a little): Here's the trap, anyway, and them getting out (all look to wings).

Enter Himself, Kathrin, and Kitty (the girls in some characteristically Spanish finery).

HIMSELF :

I'm practising patience, Kathrin veen, practising patience—smooth—smooth as glass by this time (about to pass into gate).

SKIPPER :

Haul your wind. Lie to a minute. (They stop.)

KATHRIN

(Delightedly) : George!

SKIPPER :

Stay a minute, Kathrin. See here (suddenly grips Ballamore), my hearty. You're going to get a welting later, mind that (shakes him). But, to show you (snatches licence from Ballamore, and hands it to Himself)—read that; read it!

HIMSELF

(Helpless) : Read it, Kathrin veen.

KATHRIN :

Why, it looks like a licence, Kitty!

KITTY :

Yes, of course. I'll read it (reads inaudibly). (Then aloud) : Of course it's a licence. Well, George, and what's wrong with it?

BALLAMORE :

The Parson himself said it was all right!

KITTY :

So it is. H'm—"Well beloved Thomas Creer"—that's you—"and Katharine Kelly"—that's ME!

SKIPPER :

Oh?!—ah?! Look here, my hearty (to Ballamore), maybe it is all right! You're for marrying my well-beloved sister, eh? Kitty, is it?

KITTY :

Of course, George. "Katharine"—certainly!

BALLAMORE :

And it's you, Kitty? You and me? Is that true?

KITTY :

It must be me! There's my name! If not, this would be a breach of promise, I'm afraid, Thomas!

HIMSELF

(To Kathrin): Herself ought to have been here, Kathrin veen!

KATHRIN :

It's all right, father. It is George I'm going to be married to.

HIMSELF :

But, Kathrin veen, when we get home!

KATHRIN :

Easy enough; only patience—smooth—smooth as glass. You can be that. And I won't need to be!

SKIPPER :

Well, look here, my hearty; didn't you know which it was of the two?

BALLAMORE

(Looking at Kitty): I daresay if I had had my own way I'd have rathered it!

KITTY :

You do rather it as it is, don't you, Thomas?

BALLAMORE :

Certainly I do, if—. (Sounds of trap—sensation.)

KATHRIN :

George, Herself is coming in this trap! Don't you think—

SKIPPER :

Aye, aye; a stern chase—a long chase. There's a leading wind. (Motions them to go. Exit Himself and Kathrin through gate up path.)

KITTY :

But, George— (impatiently glancing to coming trap).

SKIPPER

(To Ballamore): Look here, my hearty; my opinion of you is that you're one that needs to be took in tow! And it's lucky

for you that you've got took in tow, and that them papers is right!

KITTY :

George, I hear a trap!

SKIPPER :

It's a cart. Listen! It's this way. You can follow us into the church; and you're welcome to look on!

BALLAMORE :

For a lesson, like?

SKIPPER :

No doubt you'll be the better of it. Well, it's so be that I'm in a good humour afterwards—afterwards—d'you hear, my hearty?—well, then, I daresay I may act as best man!

KITTY :

Give me away, you mean, George?

SKIPPER :

I mean best man. I am the best man, mind—a long way the best man! (Wheels again): And, Quilliam—you men—close this hatch, batten it, keep the sea out—keep Herself from coming aboard! (Exit Skipper, Ballamore and Kitty up path into church.) (Quilliam and other salts occupy gateway.)

Enter Herself (somewhat flustered, through having arrived late; finds the churchyard gate barred by a rope which Bill Quilliam and crew are fastening across it).

HERSELF :

Excuse me; I'm one of the wedding party!

QUILLIAM

(To Crew, ignoring her): Now, then, haul in that slack; take a hitch over that stanchion, and stand by.

HERSELF

(Poking at Quilliam with parasol): I'm one of the wedding party! I want to get in!

QUILLIAM :

Ma'am?

HERSELF :

I want to get in—to the wedding.

QUILLIAM :

Wedding? Oh, aye! To make them pay when they come out! (Gives a set to the hitch on the gate post.)

HERSELF

(Louder) : But I want to get in; I'm one of the wedding party!

QUILLIAM :

Wedding party? Oh, aye!—wedding party right enough; they're in the church, and when they come out—old custom, you know—they'll have to pay.

HERSELF :

But I want to get in; I'm one of the party.

QUILLIAM

(Ignoring her) : Now, men, stand by. They'll be out in a minute or two. Customs' duties must be paid. No contraband here—and port dues paid. See?

HERSELF

(Hysterically) : But I want to get in—to the wedding. Let me in! I must get in (poking Quilliam with parasol).

QUILLIAM :

You're too late, ma'am.

HERSELF :

But it's my own daughter.

QUILLIAM :

What? Your own daughter!

HERSELF :

Yes; my own daughter.

QUILLIAM

(Incredulously) : Get out!

HERSELF

(Recklessly) : Yes; my own daughter (beats Quilliam with parasol).

QUILLIAM :

Hello! (Seizes end of parasol carefully, and without violence).

HERSELF

(Struggling to withdraw parasol) : Behave! You behave!

QUILLIAM :

Well, I don't want to be disfigured for life, Ma'am. What's up?

HERSELF :

I want to get into the church (excitedly) to my own daughter's wedding!

QUILLIAM :

O-o-o-h! Your own daughter, ma'am? Oh, aye! Certainly—of course! (Affects to untie knot, finds it obstinate; then to one of the crew) : Cast that off, you sir! (and comes over to expedite the casting off, viz., to secure delay).

HERSELF

(Waiting till the rope gets untied, which is done with amazing difficulty and apparent zeal) : It's scandalous; perfectly scandalous! (Suddenly bells heard.)

QUILLIAM

(Holding the rope, now loose) : Hello! they're coming out. Stay where you are, ma'am. Here you, sir (to one of the crew); stand by. We—

OMNES :

Here they are! Here they come!

(Enter, from round the gable of the church, Skipper and Kathrin; Himself behind; Ballamore and Kitty, etc.)

HERSELF

(In attitude of amazement) : Good gracious! (Skipper disbursing money to right; Ballamore ditto to left.) Dadaa! (menacingly.) Dadaa! (in deeper key of

menace, and making her way in, over the
dropped rope). Dadaa! (Still deeper
tone.)

[CURTAIN.]

Curtain rises. Outside the churchyard gate
—All arranged on stage—Skipper and
Kathrin centre; Ballamore and Kitty left
—Himself, a model of patience, and Her-
self engaged in speaking her mind.

FINIS.

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